Ph.D research proposal synopsis

Yogic Concept of Liberation :

From Ancient to Mordern Time.

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1.Introduction

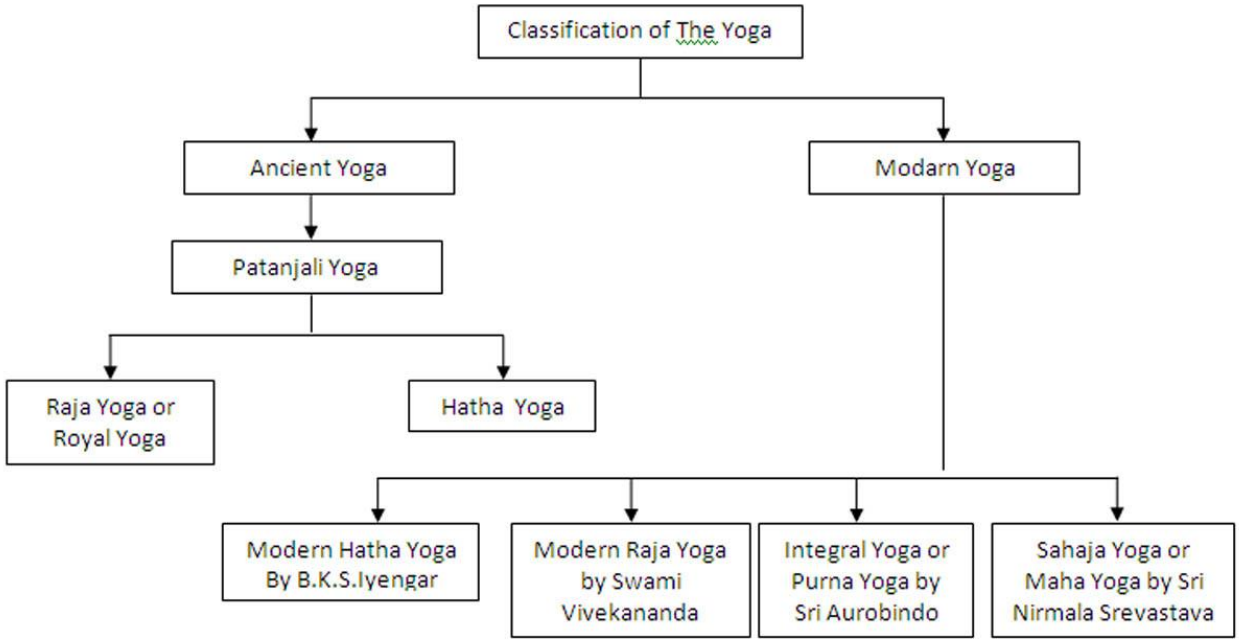
The history of yoga is very vast. To understand the yoga's concept of liberation and it's means as part of yoga philosophy, its various changes and modifications starting with Patanjali yoga, then Hata yoga, Raja yoga and finally, contemporary yoga system (i.e. the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo ,Modern Hatha Yoga of B.K.S.Iyengar, Modern Raja Yoga of swami Vivekananda, Sahaja Yoga by Shri Nirmala Srivastava)should be thoroughly studied and investigated.

My aim is to show the changes and modifications in the ways of liberation as well as yoga's various concepts from the time of Patanjali till the contemporary period. There are various branches of yoga, but I haveto choose some of them to complete the study in scheduled time.

I would like to go into the depths of yoga philosophy and its connection to the Sankhya philosophy stressing on there the concept of liberation. Further, Patanjali yoga will be discussed with emphasis on Astanga yoga (techniques of liberation) and the concept of liberation .Furthermore, the development of Hatha yoga starting from Matsyendranath and Gorakshanath will be discussed with emphasis on their concepts and techniques of liberation. After that I will discuss modern interpretation of yoga, especially of Aurobindo's integral yoga and it's concept of liberation. Finally, I will discuss the contemporary trends of yoga philosophy such as Modern Hatha Yoga of B.K.S. Iyengar, Sahaja yoga of shri Nirmala Srivastavaand Modern Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda. Along with, I will

try to see the shifts and modifications in the techniques ,concepts and means connected to liberation in contemporary yoga philosophy.

A diagram is shown to clarify my structure of the research work.


Classification of The Yoga
Ancient Yoga
Modarn Yoga
Patanjali Yoga
Raja Yoga or Royal Yoga
Hatha Yoga
Modern Hatha Yoga By B.K.S.Iyengar
Modern Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda
Integral Yoga or Purna Yoga by Sri Aurobindo
Sahaja Yoga or Maha Yoga by Sri Nirmala Srevastava

2. Statement of the Problem

2.1 Defination and clarification of key terms.

The meaning of yoga

The word ‘Yoga’ has many senses or verities of meaning. Though, the word yoga is derived from the root verb ‘yuj, which means “Yoking or connecting”. But there are many uses of this word. From those three uses are remarkable. The first sense is spiritual unification which means the union of the soul with the supreme soul. The second sense is Concentration of the mind and the third sense is complete suppression of the mental modes. Maharshi Patanjali explains ‘Yoga’ as “complete suppression of the mental modification”. Vyasa defines yoga as

concentration or yogah samadhih. However, the Yoga insists on attaining salvation through samadhi.

Several Branches of Yoga

At present, yoga is enriched with several branches. From those some are traditional and some are modern braches. The traditional approaches are based on the goal of Self-realization. But Yoga should not be compared with such a tree which has merely many branches. Rather than, it is a comprehensive spiritual art which has different way of practice according to the needs of different individuals, and even the same individual at different times.

The branches of Yoga which I will discuss are Patanjali Yoga which is the basic of Râja-Yoga, the Yoga of meditation; Hatha-Yoga, the Yoga of physical processes. Then I will work on the modern Raja Yoga of swami Vivekananda, modern Hatha Yoga of B.K.S.Iyengar,Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and Sahaja Yoga of Shri Nirmala Srivastava.

Hatha Yoga

The word Hatha Yoga consists of the word Ha and Tha. Ha means ‘’ the sun’’ and Tha means’’ the moon’’. Actually these two words refer to the two opposite currents which regulate all processes in our body. It may sounds mysterious. But there is nothing mysterious about it. As everything in our universe exists because of a positive and negative charge.

Hatha Yoga is specially known for the asanas or postures. The benefit of practicing the posture is It perfecting the body, creating a healthy physical condition, and raising Kundalini (dormant energy) upwards along the spine through using and regulating the life-currents. Thus, the body becomes better prepared for yogic awakening. It has also other benefits like the health become improved and the nervous system become strengthened after practicing years together some yogis become very expert in Hatha Yoga. They are able to control over internal organs, blood flow, and breathing.

Traditional Hatha Yoga consists of:

1. Asanas or postures;
2. Shat Karmas or six cleansing techniques, also known as Shat Kriyas;
3. Pranayama or control of breathing with retention;
4. Bandhas or locks and Mudras or seals for the regulation of Prana or life-force and Kundalini; and
5. Samadhi or Union with God, realization of the Self, ecstasy, nirvana.

The success of Hatha-Yoga depends on purify the nervous system and strengthen the body to such a degree that the hatha-yogin attains a state of freedom from heat or cold, pain and pleasure, even hunger and thirst. When yogi will reach in a remarkable level then he can attain great siddhis. These kind of siddhis are mentioned in the Hatha-Yoga-Pradîpikâ and the

Gheranda-Samhitâ. These two traditional texts are very important ,reliable source to understand this ancient practice. Hatha-Yoga compares the human body with a powerful vessel which is capable of great vitality and long life. But ordinary body transforms into this said vassel after a prolonged hard practice and austerity.

There are some disadvantages of Hatha-Yoga practice. For enlightenment it demands severe discipline, an isolated life from ordinary society and dangerous austerities. Hatha yoga sâdhanas will take most of his day and night, leaving little time for other activities.

NATH SAMPRADAYA:

Matsyendranath was the guru of Goraksanath, with whom he founded the school of hatha yoga and also the author of Kaulajnananirnaya.Nath tradition underwent its greatest expantion during the time of Goraksanath.

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga is the king of all yogas. From ancient time it is considered as royal and is called the crown of Hatha Yoga. Raja Yoga based on the concentration . Through this concentration we can clean our body and mind . Thus they become calm and attentive. Raja Yoga makes our concentration power strong and improved. Then our attention moves towards the source of our Being in order to become that Being. Raja Yoga or Ashtanga consists of the eight (ashta) limbs (anga) which makes a complete the system .

The Eight Limbs of Ashta-angas are:

1.Abstantions or yamas: harmlessness, truthfulness, non-stealing, control of senses

2. Disciplines or niyamas: cleanliness, purification of body, mind and nervous system, study of metaphysical principles, contemplation on God

3. Postures or asanas

4. Control of breathing and life-currents or pranayama

5. Turning the attention within or pratyahara

6. Concentration or dharana

7. Meditation or dhyana

8.Absorptive concentration or Samadhi

The advantage of Râja-Yoga is that all said eight steps lead to the summit of samâdhi. It is comperatively easier than the other practices.

The disadvantage of Râja-Yoga is same like hatha-yoga.

Modern Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda reconstracted Raja Yoga from Kurma Purana. In his book Raja Yoga , he defined the meaning, purpose and procedure of meditation. He wrote one of the procedures of meditation—

“Sit straight, and look at the tip of your nose. Later on we shall come to know how that concentrates the mind, how by controlling the two optic nerves one advances a long way towards the control of the arc of reaction, and so to the control of the will. Here are a few specimens of meditation. Imagine a lotus upon the top of the head, several inches up, with virtue as

its centre, and knowledge as its stalk. The eight petals of the lotus are the eight powers of the Yogi. Inside, the stamens and pistils are renunciation. If the Yogi refuses the external powers he will come to salvation. So the eight petals of the lotus are the eight powers, but the internal stamens and pistils are extreme renunciation, the renunciation of all these powers. Inside of that lotus think of the Golden One, the Almighty, the Intangible, He whose name is Om, the Inexpressible, surrounded with effulgent light. Meditate on that."

He defined *Dhyana or* meditation as—

"When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called Dhyana. When one has so intensified the power of Dhyana as to be able to reject the external part of perception and remain meditating only on the internal part, the meaning, that state is called *Samadhi"*.

Vivekananda also told, "atmano mokshartham jagat hitaya cha". The highest purpose of human existence is told in these five inspired and beautiful words.''atmano mokshartham '' means one's freedom which emphasizes the necessity of the religious for individual freedom and well-being. '' jagat hitaya''means the well-being of the world. For him , both dimensions are essential and complimentary. The self-centered religious life is a contradiction.

He told about four superior kinds of yoga. From which Raja Yoga is one. It is the way of psychology. He believes that there should be liberty for the individual to choose and pursue their likely course for achieve their goal of liberation, as every individual is unique and different from the others. But

transformation should happen religiously and spiritually. According to him religious aspect is a necessary aspect of everyone's life.

His raja yoga is considered as modern form of raja yoga. But yoga is not fit for weak people. To pursue yoga one has to prepare his mind and body very strong. Thus he can hold his concentration for a long time and utilizes it to achieve his desired goal, The Liberation.

Modern Hatha yoga(Iyengar yoga)

Yogacharaya B.K.S. Iyengar is a famous yogi and yoga teacher also . The Iyengar method of hatha yoga also includes the 8 limbs which areyama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi. It also includes focusing on the correct alignment of the body, making use of props and other objects as aids to achieve correct postures, striving towards longer holdings, adding pranayama etc. According to him,yoga is "mediation in action".

The major characteristics of Iyengar is the technique, the sequence and thetiming During practice we learn finer adjustments in the alignment of how we perform *asana* and *pranayama* which is called Technique. Sequence includes the pattern in which *asana* and *pranayama* are practiced, i.e. by varying postures and noticing when they are practiced can influence the mental and emotional effects of the practice. The length of time spent in postures or *pranayama is called timing*.It means howlong we can continue a posture and become stable. As time allows us the potential effects and benefits. Iyengar method is based on anatomical principals. Each asana is a correct position for each body part .There are various physiological system which function to their greatest potential.

B.K.S. Iyengar has systematised over 200 classical yoga poses and 14 different types of Pranayama. He makes such a methods in which students progress gradually by moving from simple poses to more complex ones and develop their mind, body and spirit step-by-step .A yogi should never forget that health must begin with the body. B.K.S.Iyenger told,'' Physical health is something that we must build up. You have to create within yourself the experience of beauty, liberation, and infinity."

He believes that only healthy body is capable to arrest the consciousness alone. So, we have to aware of our body and make master ourselves in this technique. Asana is ideal for this. He also told, "I just try to get the physical body in line with the mental body, the mental body in line with the intellectual body, and the intellectual body with the spiritual body so they are balanced. It's just pure traditional yoga, from our ancestors, from our gurus, from Patanjali."

SRI Aurobindo's Purna yoga or integral yoga

Sri Aurobindo invented a new method which is known as integral yoga or Purno yoga. Here ''purna'' indicates complete and integral indicates an unique method which includes every aspects of yoga. According to him integral also means synthesis. Because before him , there are various disciplines of yoga has already exists , i.e. hatha yoga, raja yoga , bhakti yoga , karma yoga etc.each of them emphasis on different aspects.

But according to him human beings are complete and integrated personality. So he needs each and every aspect to transform him-self. His growth depends on of all the aspect of being ,i.e. the mental ,the vital and the physical . Only then complete transformation or purna yoga is possible.

He does not prescribe any particular method . Rather than according to him ‘’ all life is yoga ‘’. Yoga is a life-long step by step journey. In which man achieves the supermental level from his ordinary mental level.Thus divinity comes down into his being. The realization of “divine life’’ in one’s life-time is the supreme goal of Purna Yoga. Her liberation is not an abstract thing. In his words,

--- “ Thus yoga implies not only the realization of God, but an entire concentration and change of our inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become a part of a divine work.’’

To achieve this divine life one has to transform himself into Gonstic being. Only in this state one can fell his supermental nature. Only in supermind state one can realize his supermental nature. But supermind is beyond of the state of the ordinary mind. To ascend into this state from the ordinary mind state , one has to pass through these intermediary mind steps , which are mind , higher mind , illumined mind , intuition , overmind and then supermind. Every stage is superior than the previous stage. Mind creates divisions between knower ,knowledge and apprehending objects , but supermind does not do so. I is the highest faculty of the mind. He explains the supermind as “the creator’’, “the real-idea’’, “the supreme truth consciousness’’.

He also told about the entire process of Involution ad Evolution. When mind falls from supermind or supermind descends down to mind – it is called the process of involution. When mind again ascend back to it’s supermental nature –this reverse process is evolution. Evolution needs three types of transformation ,i.e ,psychic transformation, spiritual transformation and supermental transformation. Then one can reach his desired goal.

Sahaja Yoga

Sahaja yoga is an unique meditation method. Shri Nirmala Srivastava is the founder of this unique method. It is also known as Maha Yoga. “Saha” means “with”, “ja” means “born”,and “yoga” means “union with one’s soul to the supreme soul.” We have born with our kundalini. The goal of Sahaja Yoga is awkening of Kundalini to get one’s self-realization or atmasaksatkar. It is a thoughtless aware state. It also talked about three nadies and seven chakras. Kundalini is the subtle dormant energy or power of pure desire which resides in the sacrum bone. Sacrum bone is placed at the base of the spine and is triangular in shape. Kundalini means “coils” and it resides three and half coils in the sacrum. Self realization is the first step in sahaja yoga.

Sahaja Yoga

Founder	Nirmala Srivastava (Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi)
Established	1970

Practice emphases

kundalini, meditation, self-realization.

Sahaja Yoga is an ancient meditation technique or lifestyle which is rediscovered and simplified by Shree Nirmala Srivastava. She is also known as Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi .She makes so easy that one can continue both sahaja yoga and family life. There is no chahges in Sahaja Yoga. It is now practiced and taught for free in over 140 countries. 'Sahaja yoga' is taught freely because none cann't pay for a living and spontaneous experience' as the founder quotes. The process of self-realization through kundalini awakening is the first step of Sahaja Yoga.

3. Aims and objectives of the Study

Every research has its some general and specific objectives. These are follows:

3.1 General objectives

The title of the proposed study indicates the general objectives of this study. The history of the yoga philosophy is very vast. So, the researcher chooses some popular kinds of yoga from classical period to contemporary period. Further, she will try to show the changes that occurred in the history of yoga philosophy from past to present in the concept of the yoga as well as in its means and concept of liberation. Furthermore, she will try to find connections, similarity or differences, new ideas about the means and concept of liberation in the yoga from part to contemporary period.

3.2 Specific objectives

Specific objectives include some research question. These are follows:

- To explain the history of yoga in brief to understand its nature, evolution, development and importance from past to modern era.

- To explain the nature of Hata yoga, how it has emerged from Patanjal yoga and what are the new features of the Hata yoga.

- To explain the nature Raja yoga and state the connections between Raja yoga and Patanjali yoga.

- To state what is the importance of the concept of liberation in the yoga philosophy.

- To investigate what ware the changes and modification that happen in the yoga concept of liberation during the post-classical period of the yoga (Hata yoga)

- To investigate what were the changes and modifications happen in yoga concept of liberation during the modern and contemporary period.

- To explore general trends and features between these various systems of yoga.

- To explore what are the new concepts that are formed in the modern and contemporary yoga.

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- To follow a specific methodology.

- Finally, draw a brief and clear conclusion.

4. Scope and limitation of the study

Every research has its own scope and limitations.

4.1 Scope

The scope of the proposed study is very wide. The researcher would examine the origin, the history of the yoga and nature of the yoga to give a clear picture of the yoga. There are various kinds of yoga from the period of Patanjali till the modern era or period. The concept of yoga existed before Patanjali yoga mentioned in the scared Vedas, before Patanjali. Patanjali first gave it a concrete form and created “Yoga Sutras.” Then various yoga practices emerged out from Patanjali’s eight limbs yoga, such as Raja yoga or classical yoga, Hata yoga etc. then, Hata yoga in modern time takes a new from through various yoga teachers like BKS iyengar etc. The integral yoga or the yoga philosophy of Arabindo gives us a completely new picture of the yoga. Swami Vivekananda also practices yoga and his yoga or meditation is will-known all over the world. Besides, in modern time there are many trends of the yoga which are still practiced on all-over the world. Few of them are discussed in this proposed study, such as – the sahaja

yoga, B.K.S. iyengar yoga etc. The various periods of the yoga will also be discussed in this study to clarify which system of yoga has emerged in which particular period.

The “Yoga Sutra” has four parts. As “The Yoga Sutra” of Patanjali is the oldest text book in the yoga philosophy and it is the basic of all yoga system. it is the primordial of all yogas. So the four parts of the book discussed in this study. Especially the chapters of the book namely sadhanapada and kaivalyapada will be mostly focused without the Patanjali yoga, the entire development of yoga will not be clarified.

After a detail study of above mentioned yogas ,we can investigate and understand the various shifts and modifications in the means and concept of liberation which has taken places in various time-periods.

4.2 Limitations

This research will have some limitations. Since the research have to be completed in a scheduled time and in a justified boundary. There are lots of ideas, techniques, trends etc. developed in Eastern and Western world on the yoga practice, but the researcher has to pick up those trends and techniques which are relevant and necessary for this study. Thus, the study became a justified one.

5. Justification of the study

Utility of the proposed study

Through this research we can know a clear picture of the yoga philosophy, its past, present and its various changes from ancient time modern period. Besides, we it describes various practices of the yoga. The yoga is not a limited subject. After sage Patanjali, there are various changes and modifications takes place in the history of the yoga as well as in the techniques and in concept of liberation. The raja yoga is known as classical yoga and also be supposed as the crown of the hatha yoga. We don't understand the nature, expansion and scope of yoga if we limit ourselves only in studying the Patanjali yoga, the Raja and the Hatha yoga. The yoga is presented in its various new feature by many yoga teachers. Aurobindo has presented yoga from a new philosophical point of view. Some yoga teacher emphasis on the yoga practices. The yoga is developed in both eastern and western world. Still many kinds of yoga are developing in many corner of the world. Some of them are accepted and well – known. To know the original status of the yoga, we have to know the new practices of the yoga. In modern age Raja yoga is presented by Swami Vivekananda. Besides, a new branch of yoga is founded by H.H. Mataji Shri Nirmala Devi. It's name is Sahaja yoga. It is based on awakening of the kundalini. From this study, we can also know- why the different types of yoga take places in different time periods and why people seek new types of yoga and accept it.

The yoga is so important that on December 11, 2014, the 193 member U.N. General Assembly approved by consensus, resolution establishing June 21 as "Internatiojnal Day of yoga".

6. Methodology

The methodological frame work is an important aspect of any research. It is a descriptive research. So critical and philosophical analysis would be followed to get the expected results of the study. Both primary and secondary sources of datas are important part of a methodology.

6.1 Sources of Data

The sources of Data could be divided in two categories. One is primary sources and another is secondary sources. These are followings :-

6.1.a Primary sources

First of all the researcher have to study the “yoga sutra of Patanjali” and its four parts. It is the oldest, authentic basic and valuable book of the yoga sutra gives the standard exposition of the yoga principles. Further, Hatha yoga Pradipika by svatmarama, shiva samhita by an unknown another and Gheranda Samhita by Gheranda are needed to understand and study the Hatha yoga. The Patanjali yoga sutra is required for understand raja yoga. “Raja Yoga” by Swami Vivekananda is a valuable book in modern Raja Yoga. Besides various books are written on Swami Vivekananda on the modern Raja yoga. To understand integral yoga, “ The Life Devine” and “The Synthesis of yoga” by Sri Aurobindo are required for the study. B.K.S. Iyengar had written “The Illustrated light on yoga”, it is helpful to understand modern hatha yoga. “Meta Modern Era” is important book to understand Sahaja Yoga. “The Bhagavat Gita” also a source of study understand the Samkhya – yoga philosophy.

6.1.b Secondary sources of Data

The researcher would collect the secondary data from different translated works like books and articles on the different schools or branches of yoga. She will also collect various journals, researches dissertation, published thesis and existing literature on ancient and modern yoga. A bibliography is attached in this regard.

7. Feasibility

The proposed research will be feasible in all respects. The researcher is confident of completing the proposed research successfully by exploring the collection of data. These Datas will be collected from different libraries and research centers like National library in Kolkata, Sanskrit college library in Kolkata, Library of Ramakrishna Mission Bidyamandir in Belur Math, District Library in Hooghly. Besides, internet can be browsed for any kind of information and various books are available through amazon and flipkart online shopping sites. Finally, guidance of the supervisions is a very important factor to complete the study in a right way.

8. Tentative Chapters Of The Study

Title :

Yogic Concept of Liberation:

From Ancient to Modern Time.

Chapters :-

Chapter – 1 : Introduction

Chapter – 2 : Patanjali Yoga,

Relation between Samkhya and Yoga

Chapter – 3 : Ancient Form of yoga

3.1 : Raja Yoga

3.2 : Hatha Yoga

3.2.1 : Nath sampradaya

Chapter – 4 : Modern Form of yoga

4.1 : Raja yoga of Swami Vivekananda

4.2 : Hatha yoga of b.k.s. Iyengar.

4.3:Integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo

4.4: Sahaja yoga of Shri Nirmala Srivastava

Chapter – 6 : Conclusion

Chapter -7: Bibliography

Conclusion

In the conclusion, it may be said that the researcher will try to explore the nature of yoga in modern and ancient time to understand the shifts and modifications which has taken place in various time periods. Besides, she will focus on the different means of liberation and concept of liberation in yoga followed by different schools of yoga in different time periods. Along with, she will excavate the reason of development of new methods and ideas in modern period of yoga. She will try to explore how modern people understand the concept of liberation. Shewill also try to present the similarities, differences and connections between ancient and modern period of the yoga by focusing on the means of liberation and the concept of liberation. Thus, a complete and comprehensive picture of the yoga will be prese

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